

University of Mississippi eGrove

Mississippi Education Collection

General Special Collections

July 2019

The Mississippi Program of Education for Exceptional Children

Author Unknown

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/ms_educ



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Unknown, Author, "The Mississippi Program of Education for Exceptional Children" (2019). *Mississippi Education Collection*. 47.
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/ms_educ/47

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the General Special Collections at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mississippi Education Collection by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

THE MISSISSIPPI PROGRAMFOREXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

The Mississippi State Legislature at its 1952 Session passed House Bill 51, an act to provide for the Education of Exceptional Children. For a short time prior to 1952, several of the larger school systems of the state had maintained classes in special education but not until the passage of this act was there such a program fostered by the state.

The philosophy upon which this program is based is to give every child his rightful heritage - an educational program so planned, adapted, and conducted as to provide each child the training and opportunity to take his rightful place in a democratic society. We are now beginning to realize that remedial and corrective teaching and training for the exceptional child is not only sound socially but is a sound economic practice. Fundamentally, the purpose of education for the exceptional child is to equip him with the attitudes and understanding, the skills and abilities, and the knowledge which will make it possible for him to become a self-supporting, contributing member of society rather than a ward of the state.

The plan of state financial assistance is that of excess cost. This means that the local school district or county system assumes the responsibility of educating exceptional children to the same number of dollars per child per year as is expended to educate normal children. As the per capita cost is usually greater for exceptional children, the state reimburses the local system this difference which is excess cost.

To reimburse the local or county school systems this excess cost, an appropriation of \$150,000 has been made for the biennium ending June 30, 1956. It is evident, with the growth of the program as indicated by the table on this page, that the appropriation will have to be increased from time to time as more handicapped children are served in these classes.

House Bill 51 defines the exceptional child as "any child of educable mind, between the ages of six and twenty-one years, except a child for whom institutional care and training are already available in the state, who is retarded in the regular public school class activities or who cannot pursue regular class work due to reason or reasons of defective hearing, vision, speech, mental retardation, or physical conditions, as determined by competent medical authorities and psychologists, shall be considered an exceptional child for the purposes of this act, provided that the medical authorities and psychologists are approved by the state board of education."

The following table gives a graphic picture of the growth of the program since its beginning in 1952:

CLASSES FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

School Year	Number and Types of Classes					Number Children	Number School Systems	Number Counties
	Ment. Retard.	Speech Correct.	Defect. Hearing	Orthoped. Handicap.	Total			
1952-53	12	1	0	0	13	185	9	8
1953-54	18	3	1	0	22	375	15	13
1954-55	26	7	1	1	35	823	23	17

There is every reason to believe that this program will continue to achieve phenomenal growth. Based on the experience of the past three years there should be more than one hundred classes serving some 2500 to 3000 exceptional children in the state by the school year 1957-58.

The program has attracted some of the best teachers in the state. Starting with limited training and little guidance in the field, many have developed into very efficient and capable special education teachers. It should be

noted that this was done entirely because of their interest in this type of child as there is no extra pay or subsidy over the financial remuneration of regular teachers.

Mississippi has developed a sound and efficient program for the education of exceptional children. Twenty-three school systems in seventeen counties of the State had in operation during the school year, 1954-55 thirty-five special classes teaching more than eight hundred handicapped children. If this program is to progress and meet the needs and demands of the people of our state some changes in basic legislation will be necessary. With these changes Mississippi will have one of the soundest programs of education for handicapped children in the United States.